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DIRECTOR.

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1. AFTER SPENDING MORNING IN MILITARY BRIEFING AT MACV HEADQUARTERS, DR. KISSINGER, AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND COS HAD LUNCH AT RESIDENCE 17 AUGUST. ALSO PRESENT WERE KISSINGER AIDS JOHN NEGROPONTE, PETER RODMAN AND DAVID ENGEL, BUT THEY DID NOT ENTER INTO DISCUSSION. CONVERSATION WAS ESSENTIALLY BETWEEN KISSINGER AND COS, WITH OCCASIONAL COMMENTS FROM BUNKER. (THIS IS TYPICAL BUNKR PROCEDURE) AFTER HE HAS HAD HIS TALKING TIME, HE DOES NOT DOMINATE SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS AND HE EXPOSES HIS SENIOR STAFF TO VIP VISITORS ON INDIVIDUAL BASIS IF TIME PERMITS. SAME PROCEDURE FOLLOWED WHEN SECRETARY CONNALLY VISITED.)

2. KISSINGER OPENED BY COMPLIMENTING STATION ON PRODUCTION AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FROM AMBASSADOR THAT STATION WAS DOING "GOOD JOB" ACROSS THE BOARD. (SEE SEPARATE MESSAGE ON THIS SUBJECT.) AFTER RECALLING OUR PREVIOUS MEETINGS IN GERMANY AND MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCES, CONVERSATION

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SHIFTED TO VIETNAM AND WE STAYED WITH THAT TOPIC FOR ALMOST TWO HOURS, BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER LUNCH.

25X1 3. ALL THE OBVIOUS SUBJECTS ON SOUTH AND NORTH VIETNAM WERE COVERED WITH RESPONDING TO KISSINGER'S SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ON ENEMY GOALS, ANTICIPATED MILITARY ACTIVITIES, STRENGTH AND MODUS OPERANDI OF VC INFRASTRUCTURE, PREPARATIONS FOR CEASE-FIRE, PROSPECTS AND PROS AND CONS OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT BASED ON NIXON 8-POINT PLAN, VIABILITY AND POSTURE OF THIEU GOVERNMENT IN ABSENCE OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, SUPPLY SITUATION IN NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM AND REQUISITES AND PROSPECTS FOR ANOTHER NVA OFFENSIVE. WITH RESPECT TO NORTH VIETNAM, DISCUSSION CENTERED ON EXTENT THAT LEADERSHIP APPRECIATES EXISTING SITUATION IN SOUTH, STRAINS AND STRESSES IN SAID LEADERSHIP (ON WHICH WE DISCLAIMED ANY INFORMATION), EFFECTS OF BOMBING ON SUPPLY SITUATION AND IMPACT OF PSYWAR PROGRAMS.

4. RATHER THAN RECOUNT HERE COS COMMENTS ON ABOVE SUBJECTS, WE ARE FORWARDING TO HQS TWO DOCUMENTS PREPARED IN CONNECTION WITH KISSINGER VISIT AT AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S REQUEST.

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AND "ENEMY INTENTIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM" THEY SUMMARIZE STATION POSITIONS ON THESE MATTERS WHICH COS FOLLOWED IN HIS ANSWERS.

5. REST OF CONVERSATION DEALT WITH U.S. POLITICAL SCENE ON WHICH KISSINGER^{R'}'S OBSERVATIONS WERE EXACTLY WHAT YOU MIGHT EXPECT, AND WITH KISSINGER'S VIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR CEASE-FIRE IN VIETNAM. IN HIS VIEW, CEASE-FIRE IN PLACE IS ABOUT BEST DEAL TH^AAT THE COMMUNISTS COULD HOPE TO GET, BECAUSE THIS WOULD AT LEAST GIVE THEM SOME, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY LASTING^E POSITIONS OF ADVANTAGE FROM WHICH LONG-TERM STRUGGLE COULD B^E CONTINUED. ON OTHER HAND, LACK OF CEASE-FIRE WOULD RESULT IN CONTINUING DEGRADATION OF NVA/VC STRENGTH IN THE SOUTH AND INCREASING EVEN IF NOT DECISIVE PROBLEMS IN THE NORTH. IN MEANWHILE, THIEU, WHO HAS ALREADY STRENGTHENED HIS REGIME DURING CURRENT OFFENSIVE, IS LIKELY TO GAIN ADDITIONAL STRENGTH AND SUPPORT. THEREFORE LOGIC OF SITUATION CALLED FOR CEASE-FIRE WITH SUBSEQUENT RETURN TO PROTRACTED WARFARE. COS SAID THAT WHILE HE PERSONALLY SHARES KISSINGER'S LOGIC, WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE AS YET THAT NORTH VIETNAMESE ALSO SHARE IT, AND THEY MAY WELL

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SHIFT INTO PROTRACTED WARFARE PHASE WITHOUT CEASE-FIRE ONCE THEIR HOPES BASED ON POSSIBLE MCGOVERN VICTORY FIZZLE.

6. IN RESPONSE TO KISSINGER STATEMENT THAT EVERY REGIME HAS BREAKING POINT, COS SAID THAT THE AVAILABLE INFORMATION DOES NOT SUGGEST THAT NVN REGIME IS CLOSE TO SUCH A POINT. ASKED ABOUT U.S. AIR FORCE CLAIMS ON DAMAGE TO TRANSPORT^{AT}ION SYSTEM AND RESULTING MATERIEL PROBLEMS, COS SAID HE DID NOT DISAGREE WITH CLAIMS BUT FELT THAT AMERICANS HAD TENDENCY TO OVERESTIMATE LEVEL OF REQUIREMENTS WHICH WERE ESSENTIAL. HAVING HAD BACKGROUND IN AND EXPERIENCE WITH POORER SOCIETIES, COS BELIEVES THAT MANY OF THE THINGS WE CONSIDER ESSENTIAL EVEN UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS WOULD BE CONSIDERED DISPENSABLE LUXURIES ELSEWHERE. ERGO, SUPPLIES REQUIRED BY NVA TO SUPPORT OPERATIONS ARE PROBABLY DRASTICALLY LESS THAN WE WOULD ESTIMATE, AND ENOUGH OF THESE SUPPLIES ARE STILL GETTING THROUGH TO SUPPORT CURRENT ACTION LEVEL.

7. AS LAST ITEM, AS HE WALKED COS TO CAR, KISSINGER ASKED FOR EXPLANATION ON EXACTLY HOW SITREPS ARE PUT TOGETHER, WHO DETERMINES FINAL TEXT, ETC.

8. KISSINGER HAS TWO MEETINGS SCHEDULED WITH PRESIDENT

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THIEU, AT 1630 HOURS 17 AUGUST AND 1000 HOURS 18 AUGUST. DEPARTURE FOR TOKYO SCHEDULED FOR 1600 HOURS 18 AUGUST. THERE WILL BE DEPARTURE STATEMENT FOR PRESS BUT NO DISCUSSION OR OTHER PERSONAL CONTACT WITH JOURNALISTS. E2 IMPDET.

S E C R E T

SECRET

SAIGON

25X1 RYBAT [REDACTED]

25X1 REF: [REDACTED] (IN 685798)*

1. APPRECIATE YOUR SENDING US THE GIST OF YOUR CONVERSATIONS
WITH DR. KISSINGER AS OUTLINED REF. WE WILL LOOK FORWARD
TO RECEIVING THE TEXT OF THE TWO PAPERS PREPARED BY THE
STATION FOR HIM MENTIONED IN PARA 4 OF REF. YOUR REMARKS AS
REPORTED LAST SENTENCE PARA 5 AND PARA 6 OF REF APPEAR
REALISTIC TO US AND ARE GENERALLY IN LINE WITH OUR APPRAISALS
all
~~CS~~ THOSE SUBJECTS.

2. NO FILE.

END OF MESSAGE

SAVA _____